

## VISAS: WAIVER FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS AND EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF VALIDITY FOR BELGIAN CITIZENS

*Exchange of notes at Washington October 12 and 26, 1948*

*Entered into force October 26, 1948; operative from October 15, 1948*

*Terminated June 22, 1962, by agreement of May 3, and 23, 1962*<sup>1</sup>

62 Stat. 3707; Treaties and Other  
International Acts Series 1891

### *The Belgian Embassy to the Department of State*

AMBASSADE DE BELGIQUE

No. 4723

The Belgian Embassy presents its compliments to the Department of State and has the honor to inform the Department that the Belgian Government has decided to waive from the 15th of October 1948 all visa requirements for American citizens rightfully bearing valid American passports who wish to proceed to Belgium either for transit or for a stay not exceeding two months.

It should be understood that this measure does not alter otherwise the present Belgian regulations governing the sojourn, the establishment or employment of foreigners which remain applicable to American citizens as before.

The Belgian Government has further decided that American military personnel belonging to the American Forces of occupation in Germany on detached service or on leave, will be authorized to proceed to Belgium on presentation of a military certificate of identity, bearing a photograph of the holder, together with either an order of mission or a leave furlough. The previous visa requirements on the latter document will be waived from the 15th of October 1948.

A valid american passport will still be required from American military personnel travelling in civilian clothes proceeding to Belgium either on duty or on leave.

The civilian personnel of American nationality employed by agencies of the American Government or of the American Army similar to the "Army Exchange Service" (with the exception of the technical counsellors rep-

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<sup>1</sup> 13 UST 1246; TIAS 5071.

resenting commercial interests) and the American personnel of the Red Cross are submitted to the same regulations as the military personnel as far as they travel in uniform. In their case a "letter of authority to visit a foreign country" by which the United States Army takes full responsibility for the journey takes the place of the order of mission or passport.

An American passport is needed for journeys performed by the above mentioned categories of personnel when they travel in civilian clothes.

The Belgian Embassy understands that the Government of the United States of America contemplates granting to Belgian subjects who intend to proceed to the United States for a temporary visit non-immigrant visas which would be valid for presentation at a port of entry at any time or any numbers of times during a period of twenty-four months instead of the present twelve months. The waiving of passport fees for non-immigrant temporary visitors would be continued.

Having decided to waive altogether visa requirements for American citizens proceeding for short stays in Belgium, the Belgian Government would appreciate it if the Government of the United States could instruct the American consular and immigration authorities to reduce to the minimum the formalities accompanying the issuance of non-immigrant visas to Belgian nationals and to facilitate to the utmost the entry in the United States of the rightful bearers of such visas.

The Belgian Embassy would be very grateful if the Department of State would be good enough to inform the Embassy whether these proposals are agreeable to the Government of the United States.

WASHINGTON, *October 12, 1948*

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*Washington, D.C.*

[SEAL]

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*The Acting Secretary of State to the Belgian Ambassador*

The Acting Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Belgian Ambassador and has the honor to refer to the Embassy's note number 4723 of October 12, 1948, concerning the visa requirements for American citizens who wish to proceed to Belgium and to remain therein for a temporary period of time.

It is understood that beginning October 15, 1948, American citizens, in possession of valid passports issued by the Government of the United States, proceeding to continental Belgium for transit or for a stay of not exceeding two months, are not required to be in possession of valid visas; and that such American citizens are subject to the present Belgian regulations governing the sojourn, establishment or employment in Belgium of persons of other than Belgian nationality.

It is also understood that beginning October 15, 1948, military personnel of the American Occupation Forces in Germany who are American citizens, who are on detached service or on furlough, and who are in possession of a military certificate of identity bearing a photograph of the holder, together with travel orders or evidence of authorized military furlough, may proceed to continental Belgium for transit or for a stay of not exceeding two months without the necessity of obtaining a valid Belgian visa. Such personnel traveling to continental Belgium and who are in civilian clothes, however, are required to be in possession of valid passports issued by the Government of the United States.

It is further understood that beginning October 15, 1948, civilian personnel employed by agencies of the Government of the United States or by the American Army, who are American citizens (with the exception of technical counsellors representing commercial interests), and personnel of the Red Cross who are American citizens, may proceed to continental Belgium in the same manner as the military personnel mentioned in the preceding paragraph, provided they are in possession of letters of authority to visit a foreign country issued by the appropriate American Army authorities. Such personnel traveling to continental Belgium and who are in civilian clothes, however, are required to be in possession of valid passports issued by the Government of the United States.

The Government of the United States is appreciative of these concessions upon the part of the Government of Belgium and desires to grant as nearly as possible similar concessions to Belgian nationals who apply for visas with which to proceed to the United States as nonimmigrants.

Under the provisions of Section 30, Alien Registration Act of 1940, approved June 28, 1940,<sup>2</sup> any alien seeking to enter the United States who does not present a valid visa or other permit to enter, except in emergency cases, shall be excluded from admission. In view of this provision of law, the Government of the United States cannot reciprocate in identical terms. However, the Government of the United States will grant passport visas without fees and valid for any number of applications for admission into the United States within a period of twenty-four months from date of issuance, instead of the present twelve months' period of validity of such visas, to Belgian nationals who are proceeding to the United States and its possessions for business or pleasure purposes and who are *bona fide* nonimmigrants within the meaning of the immigration laws of the United States, provided the Belgian passport of each bearer remains valid during the period of the validity of the visa. All other classes of nonimmigrant passport visas granted Belgian nationals will continue to be valid, as at present, for a period of twelve months, provided the Belgian passport of each bearer remains valid for that period of time.

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<sup>2</sup> 54 Stat. 673.

This arrangement will not disturb the reciprocal nonimmigrant passport visa fee arrangement concluded between the Governments of the United States and Belgium and which became effective February 17, 1947,<sup>3</sup> whereby each Government agreed to waive nonimmigrant passport visa fees for nationals of the other country.

The period of validity of a visa relates only to the period within which it may be used in connection with an application for admission at a port of entry into the United States and its possessions, and not to the length of stay in the United States which may be permitted the bearer after he is admitted. The period of each stay will, as at present, continue to be determined by the immigration authorities.

The fee for an immigration visa and application therefor to permit an alien to apply for admission into the United States with the privilege of residing permanently in this country is \$10.00. The amount of this fee is prescribed by the Immigration Act of 1924,<sup>4</sup> and it may not be changed on the basis of a reciprocal arrangement.

The Government of Belgium may be assured that American diplomatic and consular officers will facilitate to the utmost, consistent with the immigration laws and regulations, the granting of nonimmigrant passport visas to qualified Belgian nationals who are in possession of valid Belgian passports.

H. J. L.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, October 26, 1948.*

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<sup>3</sup> TIAS 1879, *ante*, p. 651.

<sup>4</sup> 43 Stat. 153.